

# 101 critical days begin

By Lt. Col. Richard Martin  
48th Fighter Wing safety chief

As we approach the 101 Most Critical Days, we approach it in a sullen mood. We have already lost two members of the Liberty Wing to motor vehicle mishaps.

These mishaps would have been preventable if the members performed a proper risk assessment of their activities.

A risk assessment is not just for the time that you are on duty. It applies to every minute of the day for every activity that you are involved in and every maneuver you wish to make.

So far this fiscal year, we've had 29 serious mishaps, 18 which were non-duty related, two of which were fatal. Of the two fatal mishaps, one involved a motorcycle. This is approximately half of the total mishaps we experienced for the entire fiscal year of 1996.

## Preventable mishaps

These mishaps were all preventable if the individuals involved had performed a proper risk assessment of the actions they were going to take or perform. This time of year makes it even more critical to assess risk.

As the weather improves more people will venture out and participate in more activities. Some will venture out onto the road and others will participate in outdoor sporting activities. The local people will be taking advantage of their Bank Holiday Monday which gives them a three-day weekend when we have our Memorial Day Weekend. This will mean more traffic on the roads and an increased chance of mishaps.

## Motorcycle traffic

Speaking of traffic, due to the early arrival of good weather, more motorcycles are taking to the roads. Motorcyclists need to be extra cautious, espe-

cially if they haven't been riding their machine in a while due to the bad weather in the winter months. It would be advisable to sign up for a motorcycle safety course to polish up the skills which may have been dormant during the winter months.

Motorcyclists should also remember that they no longer have a ton of metal around them. A proper risk assessment must be conducted before performing any maneuver. The rider must not weigh just the benefits of a particular action, such as overtaking another vehicle, but also weigh the consequences of such maneuvers. A "what if" approach should be used. Riders should ask themselves the worst-case scenario. Example: What would happen if I overtook both of these vehicles and one pulls out unexpectedly while I am overtaking? These kinds of questions must be asked. They also work for drivers.

Both of our fatalities involved personal motor vehicles and overtaking. They both involved two-lane roads and overtaking more than one vehicle at a time. The only distinguishing part of both mishaps was one involved a two-wheeled vehicle and one involved a four-wheeled vehicle.

## Vigilance is key

As the 101 Most Critical Days approach, make every effort to be extra vigilant in what ever you do. Enjoy your barbecue, but don't start it with too much lighter fluid and don't apply lighter fluid to already lit coals. Remember when doing your gardening or doing yard work, personal protective equipment should be used, i.e. goggles, gloves and sturdy foot wear. If you're out on the road, be patient, drive defensively, and always expect the unexpected.

Make this Memorial Day the safest one ever, and make the upcoming 101 Critical Days of Summer the most enjoyable and not the most tragic. Don't let Memorial Day make a memory of you.

## Action lines

Dear Colonel Richardson,

I am writing to express my thanks to you and the ladies and gentlemen of the leadership school. They came to our school and re-sited some benches in our "Quiet Area," which necessitated some hours work.

I enjoyed the opportunity to speak at the leadership school to outline the project.

The leadership school have offered us the opportunity to raise further projects, and I am consulting with our governing body about other possibilities.

Once again, thank you. Our children will also appreciate being able to use the quiet area again.

**Stephen Kite**  
Headteacher  
Edmund de Moundeford School

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48th Fighter Wing  
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